Utah Program Improvement Planning System (UPIPS) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT SOUTH SANPETE SCHOOL DISTRICT April 13, 2006

The attached report contains the results of the first two phases (Self-Assessment Process and On-Site Validation Visit) of the Utah Special Education Program Improvement Planning System (UPIPS). This Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process is conducted by the Utah State Office of Education (USOE) Special Education Services (SES), as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B. The process is designed to focus resources on improving results for students with disabilities through enhanced partnerships between district programs, USOE-SES, the Utah Personnel Development Center, parents, and advocates.

The first phase of this process included the completion of the Self-Assessment and the development of a Program Improvement Plan. The second phase, On-Site Validation, conducted in South Sanpete School District on December 1-2, 2005, included student record review, interviews with district and school administrators, related service professionals, teachers, parents, and students. Parent surveys were also mailed to a small sample of district parents. Information from these data sources was shared in an exit meeting attended by staff from South Sanpete School District and members of the Steering Committee.

This report contains a more complete description of the process utilized to collect data and to determine strengths, areas out of compliance with the requirements of IDEA, and recommendations for improvement in each of the core IDEA areas.

Areas of Strength

The validation team found the following:

General Supervision

- South Sanpete School District Special Education Director uses, as appropriate, state CSPD to train staff to meet needs of students with disabilities.
- The Special Education Director participates in monthly school administrator meetings during which special education updates are given.
- Special education faculty and related service providers meet quarterly to discus specific needs and concerns
- A Special Education representative meets on a monthly basis with all service agencies at the Local Interagency Council meetings.
- Special education files showed evidence of correction of errors discovered during self-assessment process.
- Teachers expressed gratitude for the strong administrative support from Special Education Director and Superintendent.
- Special education files were very well organized.
- Specialized instruction was evident in general education classrooms; specialized instruction is often supported by paraprofessionals.
- Students expressed receiving more assistance from their special education services.
- General education teachers described ownership of students in special education.
- Data-based professional development program includes the training of paraprofessionals as well as teachers.
- Child Find includes contact with private schools and Headstart, as well as community communication in both English and Spanish.

Parent Involvement

- South Sanpete School District provides both formal and informal opportunities for public input regarding Special Education Programs:
 - There is a public comment period before each monthly school board meeting.
 - o Individuals may also request time on the board's formal agenda.
- Special education teachers and related service providers meet and correspond frequently with parents to discuss student needs.
- Parents are able to email and/or call teachers directly to discuss student needs.
- UPIPS Steering Committee included multiple parent representatives.
- Special education files included replacement Initial Consent for Placement forms, with parent signatures, if files had been missing the form.

- Both foster parent and birth parent involvement in IEPs was documented, as needed.
- Parent signatures were consistently found in special education files.
- Teachers, when interviewed, ranked parent involvement as an important part of the special education process.
- Parents felt comfortable contacting school and district personnel with questions or concerns.
- Parents report that school special education teachers care about their students.

Free Appropriate Public Education in the Least Restrictive Environment

- IEPs include an explanation of the extent to which the student will not participate with non-disabled students in the regular class.
- Students with disabilities participate in state assessment programs, with appropriate accommodations as needed.
- Special education staff demonstrated a willingness to learn and apply that new knowledge.
- Functional Behavior Assessments (FBA) and Behavior Intervention Plans (BIP) were being utilized consistently across settings in South Sanpete School District.
- Special factors were generally addressed correctly on IEPs.
- Specific special education services were listed on IEPs.
- Preschool files included additional data to support eligibility decisions.

Transitions

- A school district representative participates in transition planning meetings with the Early Intervention provider.
- Age of Majority form is completed by parents and student on or before the student's 17th birthday.
- Students invited to and participate in IEP meetings, as shown by their signature and described in student focus group.
- Student input is considered and documented when developing the transition plan.
- Transition plans included in special education files, when appropriate.

Disproportionality

- Prevalence of students with disabilities by ethnicity is at a rate comparable to the demographic distribution in the South Sanpete School District.
- South Sanpete School District reported 1 suspension/expulsions for longer than 10 days during the 2004-2005 school year.

Areas of Systemic Noncompliance*

- ✓ Pre-Referral Interventions form did not document at least 2 classroom interventions implemented before referral; Pre-Referral Interventions form did not document at least 2 classroom interventions failed, with supporting data.
- ✓ Caseload limits of 1 teacher not within maximum allowed.
- ✓ Procedural Safeguards-- Copies to parents of Review of Existing Evaluation Data and Evaluation Summary Reports not documented. Notice of Meeting for IEP, Placement, and Eligibility meetings missing or incomplete. Prior Written Notice of Evaluation/Reevaluation and Eligibility missing.
- ✓ Evaluation/Reevaluation-- Evaluation Procedures not followed: review of existing evaluation form missing; students were not assessed in all areas related to suspected disability and sufficiently comprehensive to identify needs; Evaluation Summary Report was missing or did not include data.
- ✓ Timelines-- Timelines for reevaluation exceeded or unable to determine due to missing forms.
- ✓ IEP Content— IEP Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP) statements did not include baseline data. IEP did not document goals, services, and amount of time needed if ESY was selected.
- ✓ Placement -- Placement decisions blank or not addressed.
- ✓ Transition Plans-- Part C to Part B Transition did not include documentation that parents were informed of Part B rights and responsibilities. School to Post-School Transition plan courses of study did not address specific student needs in 33% of applicable reviewed files or were blank.; School to Post-School Transition plans did not document age appropriate transition assessments; PLAAFP statements did not address transition strengths and needs.

^{*}These areas represent items where the visiting team could not locate appropriate documentation of requirements of IDEA 2004 and Utah State Special Education Rules in student records or other data sources.